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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Division of Oil, Gas & Mining

MICHAEL R. STYLER
Executive Director

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Division Director

Inspection Report

Minerals Regulatory Program

June 20, 2012

Reviewed: 

Mine Name: Escalante Silver Mine	Permit Number: M/021/0004
Operator Name: Hecla Mining Company	Inspection Date: June 5, 2012
Inspector(s): Lynn Kunzler	Time: 9:00 pm
Other Participants: Ingred Bamberg, Doug Truman	Mine Status: Reclaimed

Elements of Inspection	Evaluated	Comment	Enforcement
1. Permits, Revisions, Transfer, Bonds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Public Safety (shafts, adits, trash, signs, highwalls)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Protection of Drainages / Erosion Control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Deleterious Material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Roads (maintenance, surfacing, dust control, safety)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Concurrent Reclamation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Backfilling/Grading (trenches, pits, roads, highwalls, shafts,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Revegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Inspection:

Company requested inspection for bond release

Inspection Summary:

Reclamation of this property has covered several years, starting with the tailings pond (completed in approximately 1999) and ending with the removal/closure of the monitoring wells and reducing the width of the access road to its original status in 2011. Vegetation establishment on the tailings pond area has exceeded reclamation standards for the last several years. In 2009, vegetation of the waste rock area and other small areas around the site was evaluated and found to meet reclamation standards. The mill building and ancillary facilities were sold to a third party for an alternative post-mining land use that was approved in 2005. At the time of this inspection, only two outstanding issues remain: the revegetation of the access road to the tailings pond, and eradication of knapweed (a listed noxious weed)

Very little vegetation has established on the reclaimed road. The very dry winter and spring being the most likely reason for the low vegetation cover. There were some native species observed, including an annual mustard, globe mallow, indian ricegrass and sagebrush. There were no noxious weeds observed on the road reclamation area. The road corridor is approximately 3,000 feet long.

While the BLM had been invited to attend this inspection, they were unable to make it and visited the site on their own. During their inspection they did find a few knapweed plants on the tailings pond area, which they removed. The Division was informed that there was an agreement made several years ago when the knapweed was first discovered that the company would have to eradicate the weed, (two years without any plants being observed) or they would need to establish a trust fund with the BLM for them to use to continue inspection and control efforts. The BLM is not willing to release the reclamation surety until this is done.

Inspection Date: June 5, 2012

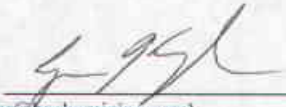
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Conclusions and Recommendations:

Since monitoring/control efforts will need to continue for at least 2 more years, if Hecla would set up a trust fund with the BLM so that they would sign off on the bond release, the Division would be able to close this file. This option was discussed with Paul Glader of Hecla. He indicated that he would look into the possibility of setting up the trust fund over them continuing to monitor and spray for the knapweed. He will let us know in a few weeks what they plan to do.

Inspector's Signature



cc: Paul Glader, Hecla (pglader@hecla-mining.com)

Ed Ginouves, BLM (eginouve@BLM.gov)

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